CHAPTER 3: SCHOOL PLANS AND PERCEPTIONS

Introduction

Educational reform efforts such as California's high school exit examination will exert an impact beyond just the receipt of a standards-based diploma. By providing feedback about student performance, the reform will serve as a catalyst for change throughout districts and schools. In addition to the performance information, the assessment can be a tool to influence and improve teaching and learning. Consequently, a key research issue is the ongoing relationship between the exit exam and teaching practices advocated by reform standards. One purpose of a thorough evaluation, then, is to monitor perceptions from the educator's perspective, over time, as well as plans that emerge in response to the exam.

Surveys are one component of the evaluation method to examine such consequences and assess the impact of the CAHSEE. In order to identify trends over time, HumRRO established a longitudinal sampling base. We selected this representative sample of 92 high schools from 27 districts to be surveyed each spring. We collected Year 1 data from this sample in Spring 2000 (Wise et al. 2000a; Wise et al., 2000b) and fielded similar surveys to the sample in Spring 2001 (Wise et al., 2001). Two surveys were administered to capture Year 2 data: one for principals and another for teachers in the same schools. The principal survey requested demographic and background information about the school, students, and parents and inquired about issues such as familiarity with, planning for, and expected impact of the CAHSEE. The teacher survey emphasized classroom practices as well as issues regarding familiarity with, planning for, and the predicted impact of the CAHSEE. Because we administered these surveys early in the CAHSEE development and implementation process, we included in both the principal and teacher surveys several open-ended questions to allow respondents to clarify their responses and to inform HumRRO of any misunderstandings or omissions we might have about the operation of California schools and their relationship to district and state operations.

In addition to annual spring surveys of a longitudinal sample of principals and teachers, HumRRO also conducted a census survey of all high school districts in Fall 2000. This District Baseline Survey was completed by over 90% of districts and addressed awareness, alignment, plans and preparation, and expectations (Sipes et al., 2001). Most surveys were completed by an Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum or an equivalent staff member.

Survey Development

The following are the main questions addressed in these surveys:

1. What is the extent and type of current preparation for the CAHSEE?
2. What degree of familiarity do schools currently have with the CAHSEE?
3. How familiar are schools with the State Content Standards?
4. How familiar are schools with the CAHSEE score report?

5. What activities have schools undertaken to prepare students for the first administration of the CAHSEE?
6. How do schools anticipate addressing failures on the CAHSEE?
7. What are schools' predictions for first administration pass rates?
8. What are schools' predictions for the impact of the CAHSEE?
9. What are schools' predictions for influence of the CAHSEE on instructional practices?
10. What are schools' estimates of the percentage of students, by various student subgroups, who have had instruction in each of the content standards?
11. In what courses are the standards being taught, at what level are they being taught, and to whom are they being taught?

To the extent possible, survey items on the Spring 2001 surveys were identical to those on the Spring 2000 surveys. This matching served to maximize comparability across years, so that trends could be inferred. However, some items that addressed the "upcoming" test needed to be reworded to reflect the fact that the first administration had already occurred.

In addition, we had gained experience from the Fall 2000 District Baseline Survey that informed survey development. This survey was not part of the longitudinal survey program at the schoolhouse level, but rather was a one-time census survey of high school district officials. The California Department of Education (CDE) and HumRRO personnel expended considerable effort to ensure the highest possible quality and clarity of the survey items. Therefore, when developing the Spring 2001 surveys, we included some new items, as well as some items from the Fall 2000 instrument that had been improved from their earlier versions in the Spring 2000 survey.

Finally, some items were omitted from and a few new items were added to the Spring 2001 version of the longitudinal surveys. A notable addition was the request that teachers identify specific courses in which standards are covered.

Sampling and Administration

The goal for the sampling plan was to select districts for inclusion in the CAHSEE evaluation data collection efforts that would be as representative as possible. A complete description of the sampling procedure is presented in Wise et al. (2000a). In short, a representative sample of 27 districts was selected in Spring 2000 for intensive study over the course of the CAHSEE evaluation. Replacements were identified for each district (except for Los Angeles, which is irreplaceable) in case the targeted district could not participate. In each original and replacement district, we selected 1–15 high schools, depending on district size, to create a representative sample of 92 schools. Where possible, we identified replacements for each selected school. In small districts containing only one or two high schools, all schools were in the original sample. Sampling ratios were established so that each school would represent approximately the same number of 10^{th} grade students. In this way simple averages across the schools in the sample would provide estimates for all 10^{th} grade students in the state.

The principals and teachers of these schools were surveyed in Spring 2000; results are reported in Wise et al. (2000a). Schools from all but three districts participated at that time. In Spring 2001, all of the previously participating districts as well as two of the previously nonparticipating districts indicated a willingness to participate. One nonparticipating district was replaced.

The resulting sample for the principal and teacher surveys still comprised 27 districts. Principal and teacher survey packets were shipped in mid-May 2001 to 92 schools to the attention of the principal or point of contact (POC). A copy of the survey instruments is included in Appendix B.

We asked principals to complete their questionnaires or to designate someone to do so. We also asked principals to identify one teacher of Algebra 1, or other appropriate mathematics course, and one 9th or 10th grade English-language arts (ELA) teacher to complete the teacher surveys (if faculty size was sufficient). We did not select the specific teachers to be surveyed, but instead, instructed principals, "If possible, select teachers who completed the survey last spring, or select teachers who have several years of experience in their subject area." Due to the nature of this distribution process, it is likely that the teachers who completed the surveys were more familiar with the CAHSEE than the wider teacher population. While this familiarity is desirable when asking teachers to predict test results, one disadvantage is that the teachers' estimates of their own familiarity with the CAHSEE may not be representative of all California high school teachers. The reader is cautioned to bear this in mind when reading the following survey results.

We requested that evaluation materials be returned by the end of May. Follow-up telephone calls were initiated the first full week of June to schools that had not responded, to encourage completion of their evaluation materials.

Findings

Forty-five high school principals and 80 teachers, representing 48 schools across 22 districts, completed surveys. Results are reported in the following areas:

- Background
- Knowledge
- Preparation thus far
- Future plans
- Expectations
- Standards taught
- Other

Detailed results are presented in Wise et al. (2001). A summary of these results is presented here. As appropriate, we compare responses to the Spring 2001 survey with responses to a comparable question on the Spring 2000 surveys; this provides information regarding trends and stability of responses over time. Note that these comparisons are

presented at a summary level; that is, changes in responses from individual schools or districts are not presented.

Background

Principals and teachers were asked to provide demographic information on themselves. The large majority of principals reported education beyond a bachelor's degree (85% master's degrees, 13% doctoral degrees), as did teachers (34% some graduate school, 53% master's degrees, 5% doctoral degrees). Eighty-nine percent of teachers indicated that they are certified in their primary subject area.

Principals were asked to provide background information on their schools as well as estimates of specialty education programs and various aspects of schooling. Details of responses to quantitative items are reported in Wise et al. (2001). The principals also responded to a number of open-ended items, which are summarized here.

- The most frequently mentioned factor in "changes in student demographics or academic environment" was addition of Advanced Placement courses (10 comments from 45 respondents), more remedial/tutorial programs (7 comments), and lower socioeconomic levels of school population (6).
- In "describing the academic atmosphere," principals' responses could be summarized in four categories: "rigorous" (12 comments), "increasingly more rigorous" (15), "basic or core" (6), and "not rigorous" or "resistant to change" (3).
- Regarding "plans/strategies to prepare for individualized education program (IEP) or 504 Plan (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) changes" and "to help EL succeed with CAHSEE," apart from noting that they are "following all applicable laws," most comments referred to waiting/longing for state direction/leadership.
- The most frequently mentioned "challenges faced in meeting CAHSEE requirements" were students who enter the school with deficient preparation (10 comments); lack of algebra (specifically noted by 3), the time requirements or too many tests generally (5), and viewing CAHSEE as mainly "political" (3).
- The most frequently mentioned "benefits associated with CAHSEE" were improved student motivation (7 comments), alignment of curriculum (6), and common standards for a diploma (5).
- It is interesting that three items, which asked for "estimates of most recent school information" about graduation and mobility rates, "seniors' postgraduation plans," and "parents' education levels," revealed an absence of such data collection—"not tracked at site level," "not accurate at this time." Some did note plans to begin gathering the information.

The ELA and mathematics teachers responded to open-ended items that focused more on their classroom practices.

TABLE 3.1 Teachers' Comments on Classroom Practices

	ELA Teachers	Mathematics Teachers
In describing "changes to instructional practices based on anticipated influences from the CAHSEE":	Increased reading/ comprehension/vocabulary (8 comments from 40 respondents), writing/essays (7), practice tests (6), grammar/ spelling/punctuation (5), and test taking techniques (5)	Nothing—based on conflicting and minimal amount of information about the CAHSEE (10 comments from 40 respondents), increased mathematics instruction/courses (5), practice items (3), and test taking techniques (3)
The most frequently mentioned "challenges faced in meeting the CAHSEE requirements":	Students with inadequate preparation (7 comments, plus 4 who noted low reading skills specifically), length of the test and logistics of testing environment (6)	Students with inadequate preparation (7 comments plus 3 who noted ESL and special needs students specifically), inadequate teacher preparation (3), low parental involvement (2)
The most frequently mentioned "benefits associated with the CAHSEE":	Alignment of curriculum (8 comments), elevated expectations/accountability (6), improved student motivation (4), and "none" (4)	Alignment of curriculum/uniform standards (7 comments), elevated expectations/accountability (6), "none" (4), and increased academic rigor (3)
Under "other general comments":	Concerns about low basic skills, lack of English language proficiency, too much testing overall, inadequate accommodation of year-round school schedules, and low level of CAHSEE coverage of the framework	Concerns about low levels of parental involvement, transience, low math skills, massive amount of testing, and lack of student motivation

Knowledge

Principals and teachers were asked to report their familiarity with the CAHSEE and state content standards. The comparison of familiarity with the CAHSEE and state content standards data between 2000 and 2001 can be found in Table 3.2. Familiarity with the CAHSEE increased markedly from the first year for both groups.

TABLE 3.2 Percentage of Principals and Teachers Familiar with CAHSEE and State Content Standards

	Principals		Teachers	
Familiarity	2000	2001	2000	2001
CAHSEE				
Very familiar	22	87	22	75
Had general information	76	13	66	24
No familiarity	2	0	11	1
State Content Standards				
Very familiar	67	71	65	61
Had general information	31	29	29	39
No familiarity	0	0	3	0

Principals were also asked to estimate how aware their students and parents were of the CAHSEE. Table 3.3 provides a comparison of these data between 2001 and 2000, although the 2000 survey question asked about both students and parents in a single question. Estimates of familiarity increased noticeably in 2001.

TABLE 3.3 Percentage of Principals Estimating Levels of Student and Parent Familiarity with CAHSEE

	2000	2001	
Familiarity	Students/Parents	Students	Parents
Familiar—Very familiar (advanced knowledge)	2	31	18
Had general information	60	67	76
No familiarity	38	2	4

Preparation Thus Far

The Spring 2001 survey asked about preparation that has already been initiated. One precursor to a successful program is to align school curricula with the state content standards to ensure that students are being taught what will be tested. Thus respondents were queried about alignment with state content standards. In short, most principals indicated that they are already moving in the direction of alignment, but still have a way to go. Table 3.4 presents comparison data of responses given in 2000 and 2001 regarding preparations made to align curricula with state content standards. Surprisingly, these estimates decreased over time; this may be a result of a slightly different group responding to the survey, or may reflect a deeper understanding of the effort required. This question will be repeated in the Spring 2002 survey and responses will be monitored carefully.

Principals were asked to compare their district standards and the state content standards. In regard to ELA, most principals (67%) responded that their districts have adopted the state standards, and 29% reported that their district standards include more than the state content standards. Thus, a total of 96% indicated that their district standards encompass all state standards. In regard to mathematics, most principals (71%) responded that their districts have adopted the state standards; another 22% reported that their district standards include more

than the state content standards. Thus, a total of 93% indicated that their district standards encompass all state standards. Table 3.5 presents comparison data on the similarity between district and state standards for years 2000 and 2001. As expected, alignment between district and state standards increased over time.

TABLE 3.4 Percentage of Principals Reporting Preparations for Alignment with State Content Standards

Preparation	2000	2001
Districts/schools encourage the use of content standards	100	91
In process of aligning curricula with standards	81	56
Have plans to ensure all high school students receive instruction in each of the content standards	52	40
Textbooks align well with content standards	74	56
Cover all content standards with a mix of textbooks and supplemental materials	38	44

TABLE 3.5 Percentage of Principals Reporting Similarity between District and State Standards

	2000	2001	
Similarity between standards		ELA	Math
District adopted state standards	69	67	71
District standards include more than state standards	19	29	22
State standards include more than district standards	7	2	5
District has no official set of standards	0	2	2

Along similar lines, teachers were asked at what level their school's current curriculum covers the standards tested by the CAHSEE. Although a majority of teachers indicated that almost all of the standards are covered by their school's curriculum, the picture is considerably less optimistic than that of principals. Table 3.6 indicates that a substantial percentage of teachers indicated that half or fewer of the standards were covered by their curriculum (17% for Math, 21% for ELA), and a small percentage indicated no knowledge of the standards.

TABLE 3.6 Percentage of Teachers Indicating Coverage of Standards by Curriculum

Coverage of Standards	ELA	Mathematics
Almost all	60	57
About ¾	20	14
About ¼ - ½	11	16
Less than ¼	6	5
No knowledge of standards	3	8

When teachers were asked what plans their school or district had to increase coverage of the state content standards, nearly half (50% of ELA and 43% of mathematics teachers) indicated they were aware of in-service training to modify instructional practices. Eighteen percent of ELA teachers and 28% of mathematics teachers indicated that there were no plans to increase coverage of the standards because the standards were already fully covered.

Respondents were asked to identify the specific activities they have undertaken to prepare students for the Spring 2001 administration of the CAHSEE. Most principals reported initiating some activities; only 7%, as compared to 17% last year, indicated that they have implemented none. Figure 3.1a indicates the percentage of principals who reported implementing each activity, in descending order of endorsement; Figure 3.1b indicates teachers' responses.

Principals were also asked to indicate the types of activities their school undertook to prepare faculty/staff for the Spring 2001 administration of the CAHSEE. Seventy-one percent of principals indicated the administrators had participated in February test administration workshops, 58% delivered local workshops on test administration, 36% delivered local workshops on the CAHSEE content, 42% provided test-taking strategies, and 7% indicated "other". Nine percent of all principals indicated there was no special preparation for the faculty/staff prior to the Spring 2001 administration of the CAHSEE.

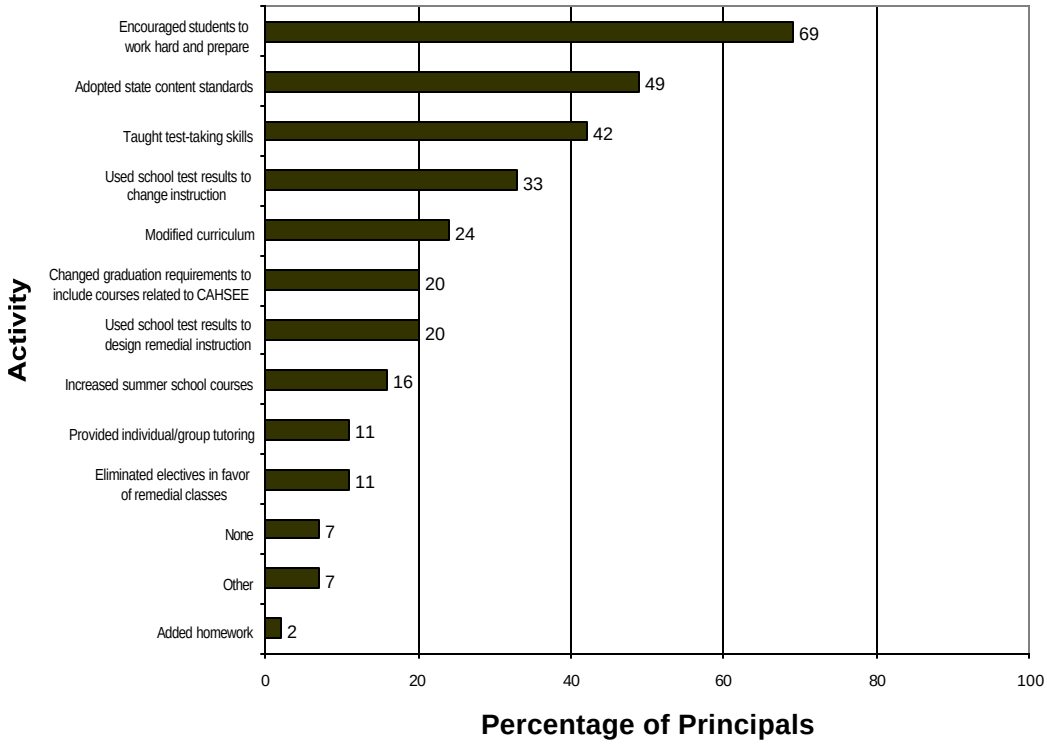

Figure 3.1a. Percentage of principals reporting activities undertaken in preparation for the Spring 2001 administration of the CAHSEE.

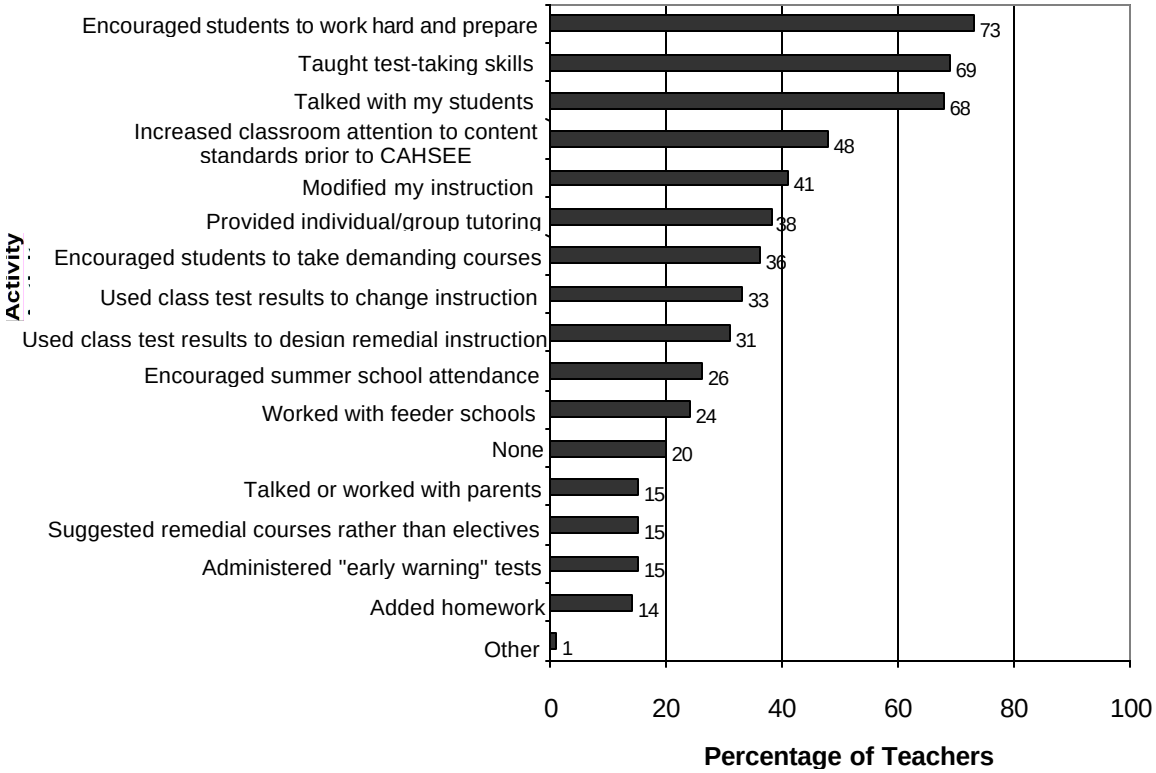

Figure 3.1b. Percentage of teachers reporting activities undertaken in preparation for the Spring 2001 administration of the CAHSEE.

In responses to open-ended items, teachers were asked to "Think about the level of preparation that students in your classes have in your subject area (English or math) for proficiency on the CAHSEE, and estimate the overall average percentage of students with excellent, good, fair, and poor preparation." Table 3.7 summarizes the teachers' estimates:

TABLE 3.7 Teacher's Estimates of Student Preparation

	60–100% Students Have Excellent or Good (English/Math) Preparation	60–100% Students Have Fair or Poor (English/Math) Preparation
ELA Teachers (40)* †	16	15
Mathematics Teachers (40)* †	8	19

* Indicated student preparation was evenly split between these two categories: ELA=8; Math=12
† No response: ELA=2; Math=2

The open-ended items on the survey also asked teachers to provide "comments specific to the ELA content standards and CAHSEE." The following comments provide good representation of teachers' input:

- "…there is too much information to cover. We also do not have any textbook that covers such a variety of information. Our department has not come up with a comprehensive plan to cover every single standard. There really has not been time or

money to gather, first, the resources we need, and secondly, the lessons to address the standards."

- "Writing needs to become a cross-curricular responsibility as do test-taking skills and reading."
- "Our site is an alternative school. Our student population changes on a weekly basis. This makes it very difficult for me to build on lessons from previous weeks."
- "As the Internet program is more developed it will be helpful. Some of the standards seem to be unreachable for the majority of the kids. Lack of motivation, weak skills and an aversion to diligence seems to be too large an obstacle. Possibly a motivation to graduate by way of the test will help, but our students do not respond well to mandatory testing, not taking it seriously. Teachers need to be more persistent in making the learning relevant and applicable."
- "Standards provide benchmarks to set goals for each grade level. These help to align curriculum so that instruction at any level is also aligned. Having these standards allows for a streamlined methodology to have certain expectations from both the students and the instructors. CAHSEE is one benchmark of achievement. Writing portfolios with level requirements also allow for alignment with the California English Standards. Portfolios allow for vertical and horizontal alignment with the school and hopefully with the District.
- "Information from the State takes too long to trickle down to the teachers…."
- "Articulation time with colleagues is crucial and [needs to be] built-in the work day. Curriculum time is a necessary challenge that we must prioritize. This will allow for a clearer understanding and provide for a cohesive development of aligned curricula."

Under "comments specific to the mathematics content standards and CAHSEE," the following quotes provide a good representation of teachers' input:

- "It is very difficult to get students ready for the CAHSEE when the requirements and policies for the exam are changing monthly if not weekly."
- "Not a bad idea, but we need to consider the idea of certifications of certain tests passed. That way a post-high school employer could look for specific skills in an individual and we would not be punishing those who choose to not take algebra, etc."
- "We have many teachers who are not themselves well prepared in mathematics, especially long-term subs who have difficulty teaching all the necessary concepts at the high school level. It is particularly difficult when many of our students are coming from elementary and middle schools without good arithmetic skills. We also have students coming to us from Mexico who have very little formal schooling before they arrive and are not well prepared. We also have students who are okay in math, but whose English skills limit their ability to read instructions and/or read word problems so that they can demonstrate their knowledge."
- "The content identified in the standards and tested by the [CA]HSEE matters. It's worth teaching. The content standards are ambitious with respect to many students I

teach. For the best students, the mathematics portion is quite easy. Unless the bar for passing is set quite high, they will pass as 9th graders."

During the Spring 2001 survey of teachers and principals in the longitudinal sample of schools, we also included a brief survey of site coordinators. (Detailed results are presented in Wise et al. (2001).) The site-coordinator survey asked for feedback on guidance received, students tested, the general approach to conducting the test, and changes planned for future administrations of CAHSEE. Coordinators for 42 schools returned the survey. About half had the title of test coordinator and another third were assistant principals. The following capture the primary responses to the open-ended items.

When asked if "any of the information received about CAHSEE was confusing" they responded:

- "Yes. The on-again-off-again if the test would count caused confusion among parents and students."
- "Yes. The late notice that the CAHSEE was not practice but did indeed count. Letters had already been sent to parents and students indicating it was a "practice test." At the last minute, students had to be told that it would count is they passed."
- "Yes. If test counted or not. What standards were being tested."
- "Yes. Students had many questions about the test—whether it would count, whether it was required, how it would be scored, when we would know results, etc.—Questions I could not answer. I needed more information earlier to share with students."
- "Yes. Must students stop and start at the same time if the test is untimed?"
- "No. Not confusing, just frustrating—the logistics for a school of 2,100 is a nightmare!"

When asked whether "any of the information received about CAHSEE was unrealistic" most comments are reflected in the following:

- "Yes. The length of the test is too long."
- "Yes. I think the test is much too long. The total testing time is approximately 9 hours. I think both the English and mathematics tests should be halved in length."
- "Yes. The concept that the test is timed, yet the student has an unlimited amount of time to finish (realistically), is not a fair situation for the school. When students need more time, it is a logistical nightmare."
- "Yes. It is unrealistic to test 9^{th} grade students and expect 10^{th}, 11^{th}, and 12^{th} to follow another schedule. We made a schedule for everyone and those not testing met with their classes—very confusing because most classes are mixed grade levels."
- "Yes. Administering a test of this magnitude several times a year unfairly impacts large high schools that were not designed as "testing centers." Turn-around times are also unrealistic and impose themselves at a test-heavy time amidst multiple other testing deadlines. (Ex: SAT-9, Golden State Exams, AP Exams...)."

- "Yes. We are an alternative educational school and run out of 8 satellite sites throughout the district. The time element was too constricting. We needed a larger window."

Regarding "facing any problems that were not covered in the information received" the most frequent responses are captured by the following comments:

- "Yes. Scheduling the entire school when only 1/3 of the school was testing. Impractical."
- "Yes. What do you do with the students who are not testing for 5 hours? What do you do with students who just arrived from CYA or community school or any other school?"
- "Yes. Expecting the tests to be returned within 24 hours is absurd. Almost impossible to process and return 1000+ answer sheets. Will be worse next year with the addition of another grade. Supervising grades 10–12 was also a problem."
- "Yes. What to do with students that finished a test in ½ hour and then became disruptive. Also, what to do with test, or what would make a test invalid."
- "Yes. Proctors needed to be able to read instructions for administering prior to test day. We did not receive estimated times for administration until one week before administration."
- "No. We dealt with whatever we needed to do, [but it was] very stressful."

When asked, "What will you do differently for the next CAHSEE administration?" the test coordinators were very responsive and provided numerous comments that are reflected in the following examples:

- "Yes. The length of the test is too long."
- "Two suggestions: 1) Find a better way to test the students—testing "part" of the school was a nightmare; 2) Give better instructions for filling in the answer sheets."
- "Will do differently: 1) Separate magnet from non-magnet students; 2) Have fewer students at a table; and 3) Let students work directly from section 1 to 2."
- "Will do differently: 1) Revise scheduling to allow more time for those who need it; and 2) Try and test on a minimum day so other grades are not impacted."
- "Will do differently: 1) Test all students; and 2) Rent space off campus for testing if possible."
- "Next year's administration will be significantly different due to the testing of 10th graders instead of 9th graders. This will virtually eliminate testing for our largest program. We will begin to consider acquiring test prep materials and evaluate the needs of our students next year. Feedback on individual and overall performance will be critical to conducting a valid needs assessment. As far as the actual administration of the test, procedures will not be significantly different."
- "We had very good testing participation, but the students in grades 10–12 felt slighted and did not attend school for 2 days. There has to be another way to

administer the test to a school whose population is roughly 1/2 freshmen. By the time SAT-9 came around, the students were frustrated and I am sure we will see a drop in our API due to this. I am not sure how we will address this issue. It is a district-wide concern because our high schools are at around 2,800 students each. Where can we house that many students for such an extended period of time without penalizing the remainder of the student body? If is a very challenging task; one that does not appear very student-friendly."

- "We received our testing dates and it appears that we will be able to address what to do with the non-testing students. The ELA will be split in two parts and over two days and the math will follow the next day. This will allow us to look at ways to address logistics."
- "Experience will help. Hope this will be given on Saturday so school won't be affected. I'm unclear about who will take the test from here on out. Lots of time for instruction was lost. Unrealistic expectations of giving it; disrupting the whole school—need practice tests or practice information—need to see how well it follows the curriculum. It feels like an experiment and clearly too many tests are being given. These are KIDS who need time to learn—not being tested to death. Well organized for giving and returning it [CAHSEE], though. Good job there."
- "The CAHSEE went very well in the school. Students knew where to go and teachers knew what to do. I'd like to have testing during Saturday or have them take it during a minimum day in their own classrooms."
- "Because students and staff had reached the saturation point in adjusting the school day for SAT-9, we decided to do large group testing in the gym. I believe we will do the classroom (20-40) students with proctors/monitors for each classroom next time. We realized the large group setting was not ideal, but we wanted to review the results before dislocating the school day as we did for SAT-9 testing. This changed the schedule for 7 days. The students were engaged in the test but the time limits were far too long for most of our students. One problem was that the scheduled time—5 hours and 4 hours—created a logistics problem. We will go to an individual classroom clock schedule and those students who need extra time will either stay in the classroom or be moved to another testing area to provide extra time."
- "I was very pleased with our test administration schedule for March 7th and March 13th. We had the 9th grade testing while the rest of the school continued with regular classes. I would not change any of the arrangements for next year."
- "Nothing. The administration went well. Directions were very clear. Going to the conference was extremely helpful. Other site coordinators from my district did not go and they were confused. I recommended that they go to the meeting next time!"

Future Plans

In addition to any preparatory steps taken thus far, the surveys inquired about future plans to deal with this new requirement. In particular, efforts to prepare teachers and others for the exam and remediation plans subsequent to the first exam administration were probed. Principals were provided a list of possible remedial practices for students who do not pass the

CAHSEE and asked which they planned to implement. Figure 3.2 lists the percentage of principals who endorsed each activity (in descending order of endorsement).

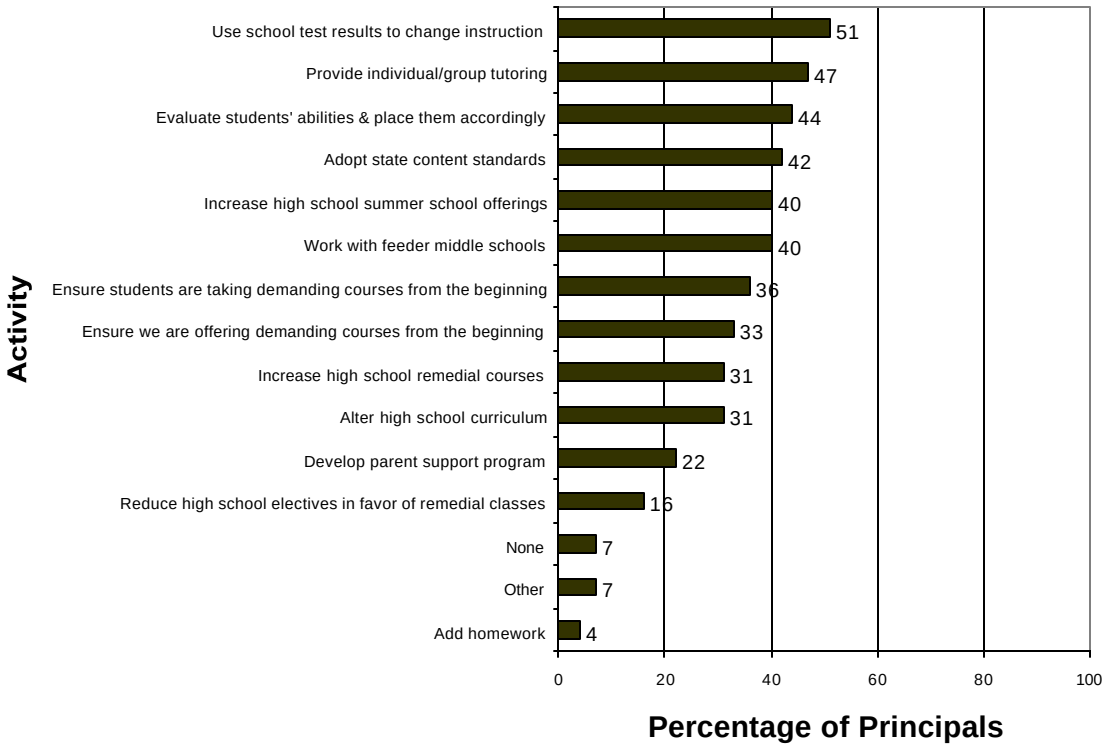

Figure 3.2. Percentage of principals reporting plans for remediation of students who do not pass the CAHSEE.

Expectations

Several survey questions queried the respondent's expectations for the exam: anticipated pass rates, impact of the exam on student motivation and parental involvement, and so on. Principals and teachers were asked to predict the impact of the CAHSEE on student motivation and parental involvement, under various circumstances.

One concern with milestones such as the CAHSEE is that students who successfully passed the CAHSEE early in their high school careers might lose motivation. Principals and teachers were asked to predict student motivation and parental involvement for those students who pass the exam on their first attempt. The predictions for this group were positive. As Figures 3.3a and 3.3b depict, most principals and teachers expected that student motivation and parental involvement would either be unaffected or improved after students cleared the hurdle of the CAHSEE.

For those students who fail the exam on the first try, the predictions were quite different. Figures 3.4a and 3.4b illustrate response patterns for principals and teachers, respectively. Both groups were split on whether the impact of failing the exam would have a negative or positive effect on student motivation. Predictions for parental involvement were very similar.

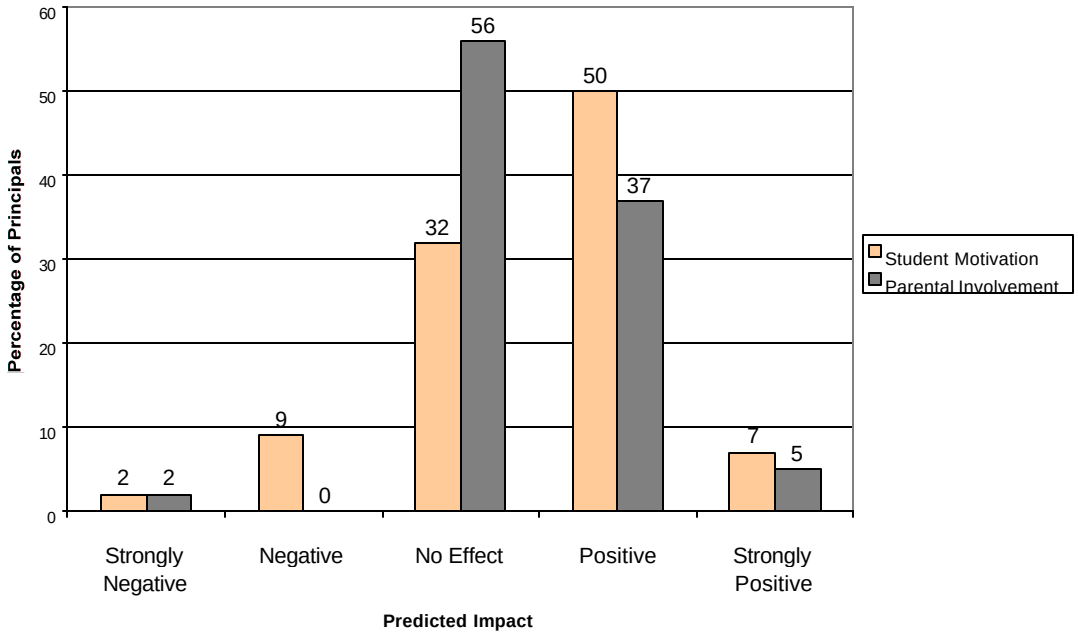

Figure 3.3a. Principals' predicted impact of the CAHSEE on student motivation and parental involvement of students who pass the exam on the first attempt

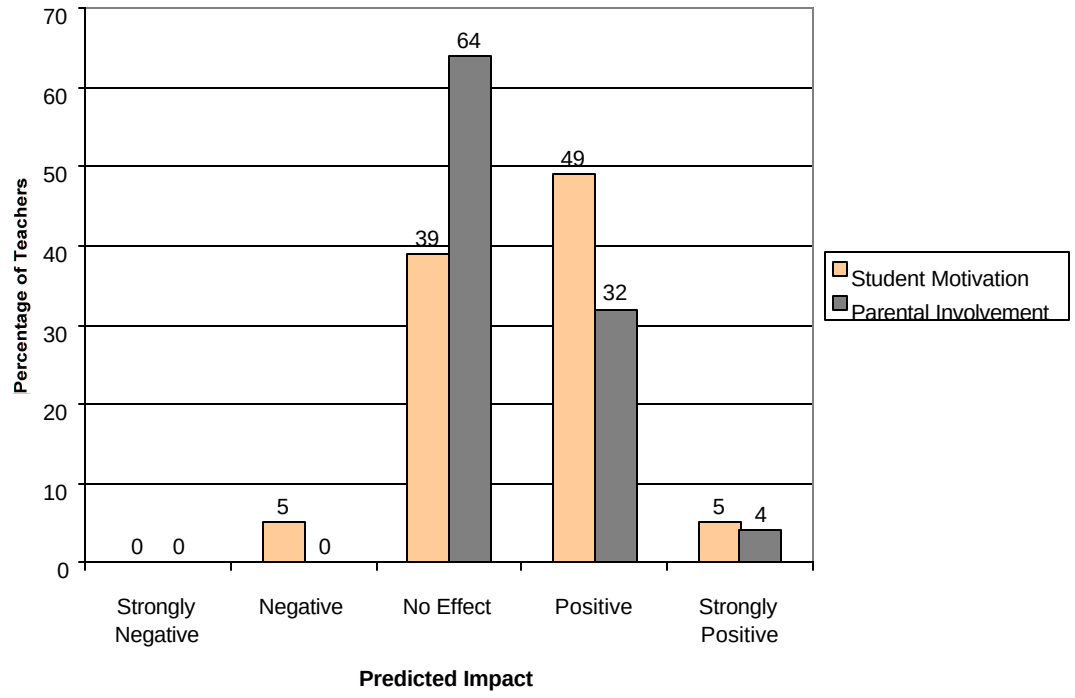

Figure 3.3b. Teachers' predicted impact of the CAHSEE on student motivation and parental involvement of students who pass the exam on the first attempt.

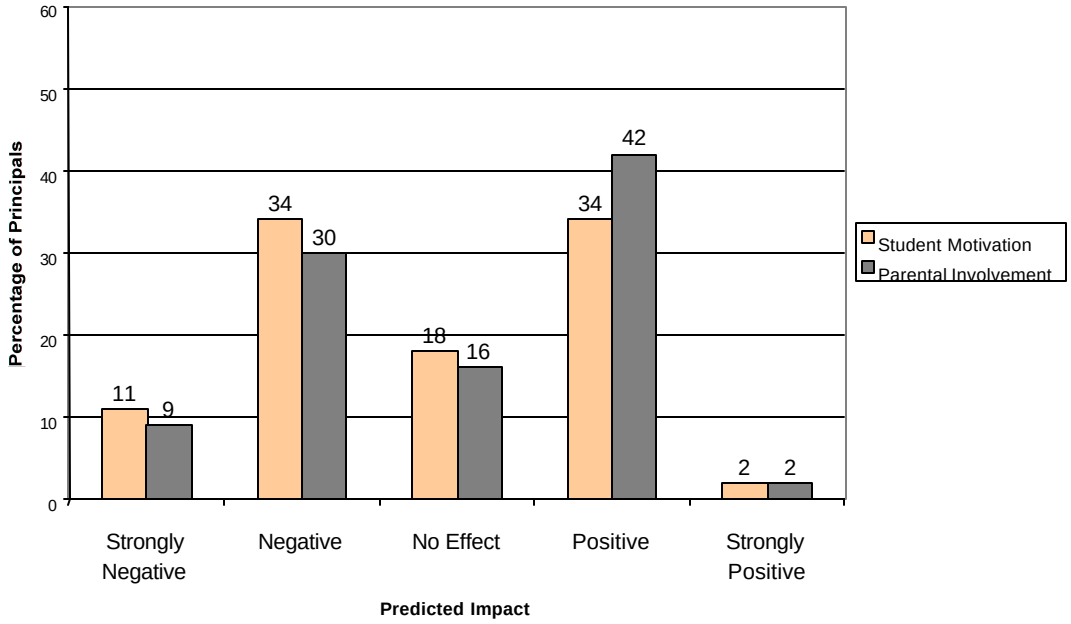

Figure 3.4a. Principals' predicted impact of the CAHSEE on student motivation and parental involvement of students who fail the exam on the first attempt.

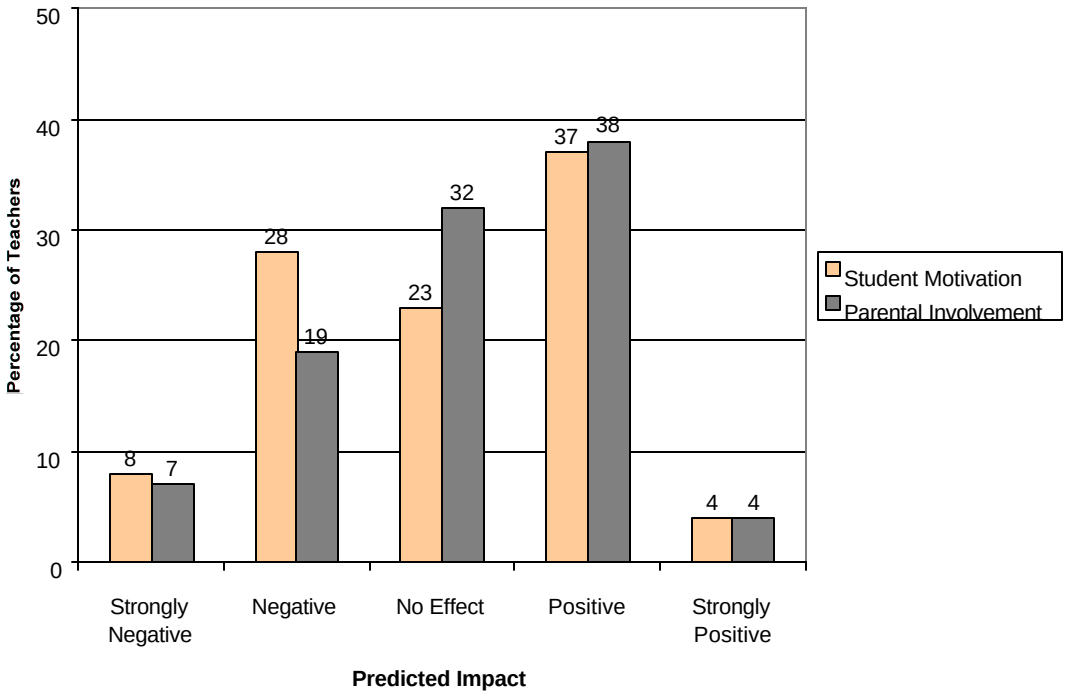

Figure 3.4b. Teachers' predicted impact of the CAHSEE on student motivation and parental involvement of students who fail the exam on the first attempt.

Principals and teachers were also asked to predict the impact of the CAHSEE on student retention and dropout rates. Responses were somewhat negative overall. Figures 3.5a and 3.5b reveal that principals' predictions were more negative than teachers'. Fifty-five percent of principals (vs. 32% of teachers) anticipated a strongly negative or negative impact on student retention rates; 80% of principals (vs. 61% of teachers) predicted a strongly negative or negative impact on student dropout rates.

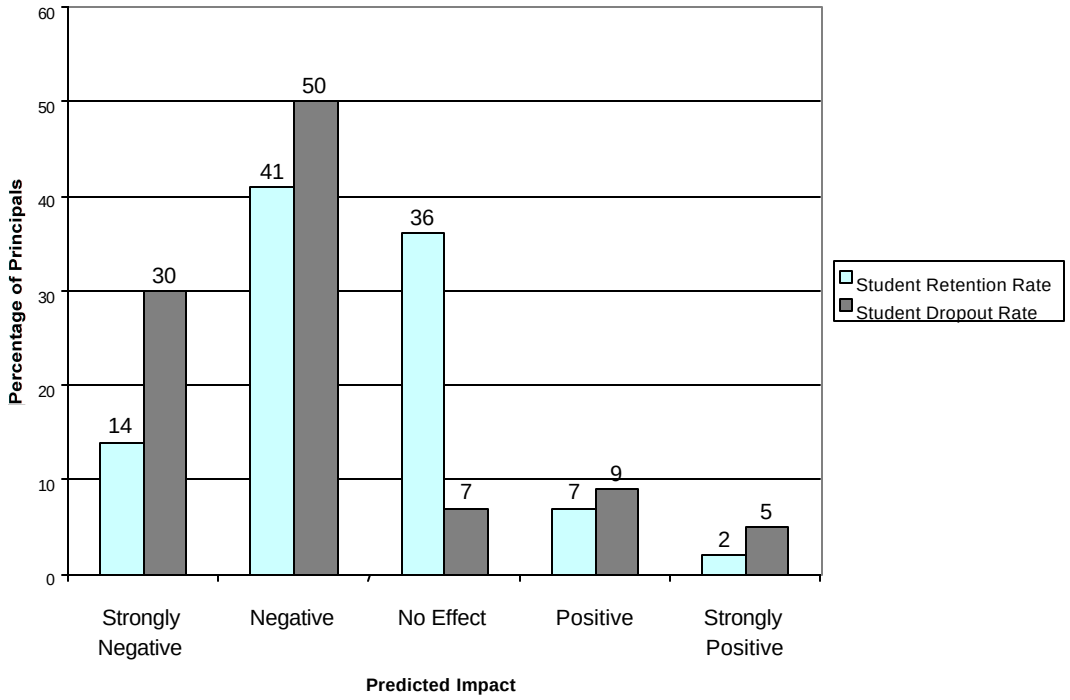

Figure 3.5a. Principals' predicted impact of the CAHSEE on student retention and dropout rates.

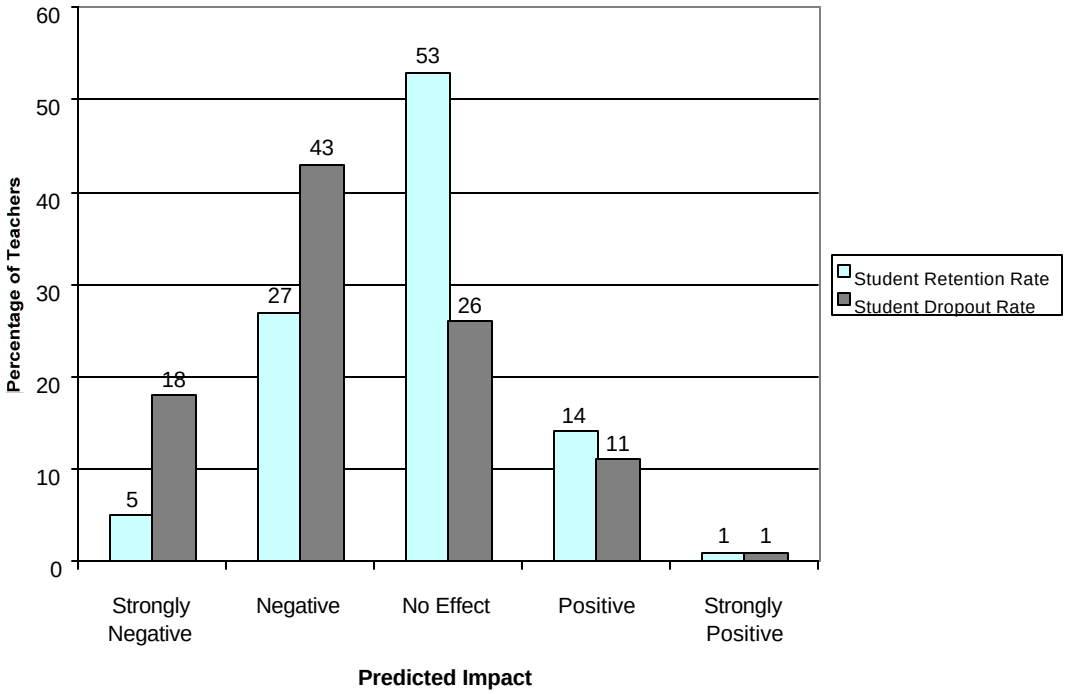

Figure 3.5b. Teachers' predicted impact of the CAHSEE on student retention and dropout rates.

The comparison of the predictions by principals and teachers of the CAHSEE on student retention and dropout rates from this year to last year is presented in Table 3.8. Results were similar between years, although principals' predictions of the impact on student dropout rates were slightly more negative this year and teachers' prediction of the impact on student retention were more neutral.

TABLE 3.8 Principals' and Teachers' Predicted Impact of CAHSEE on Student Retention and Dropout Rates

	Percentage of Principals			
	Student Retention		Student Dropout	
Impact	2000	2001	2000	2001
Strongly positive	2	2	2	5
Positive	14	7	12	9
No effect	29	36	21	7
Negative	41	41	41	50
Strongly negative	14	14	24	30
	Percentage of Teachers			
Strongly positive	0	1	1	1
Positive	11	14	9	11
No effect	20	53	20	26
Negative	44	27	44	43
Strongly negative	12	5	14	18

Principals were asked to predict, based on what they knew about their schools, the influence of the CAHSEE on classroom instructional practices over time. Figure 3.6a provides the predictions for school years 2001–2002, 2003–2004, and 2005–2006. Responses to the influence of CAHSEE for next year (2001–2002) ranged from moderately optimistic to neutral, and grew more optimistic over time.

Teachers were asked the same question about the influence of the CAHSEE on instructional practices for the 3 school years. Figure 3.6b provides the responses for all 3 years. The pattern of responses indicates that teachers expect the CAHSEE to have a positive impact on instruction, and they generally expected that impact to grow increasingly positive over time. Responses were similar in 2000 and 2001.

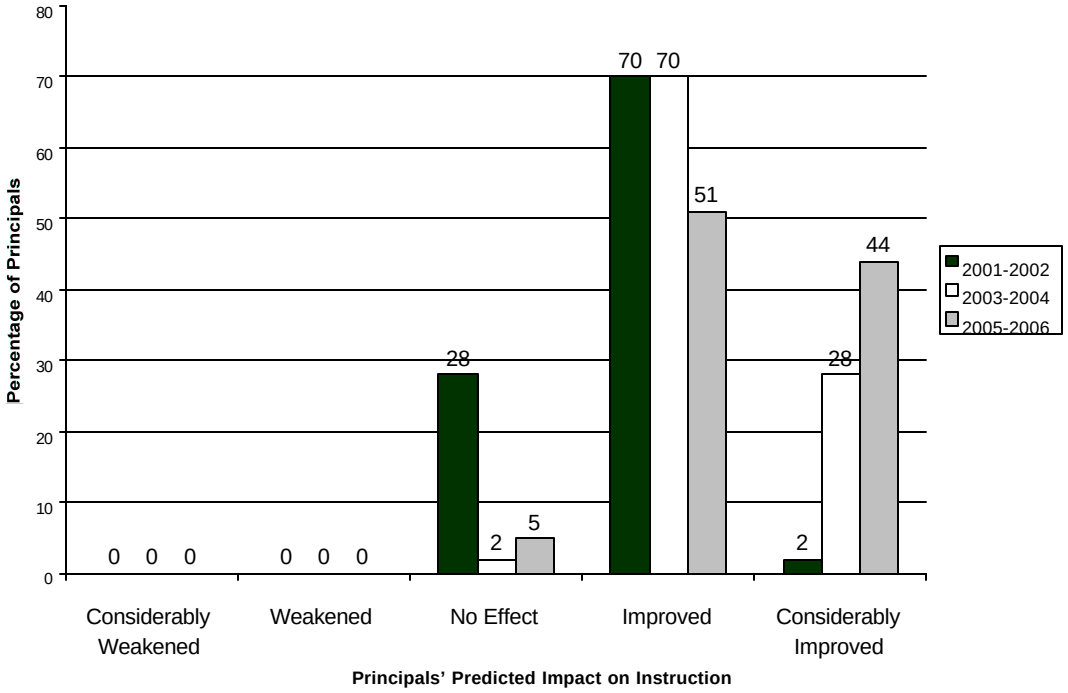

Figure 3.6a. Principals' prediction of influence of the CAHSEE on instructional practices over time.

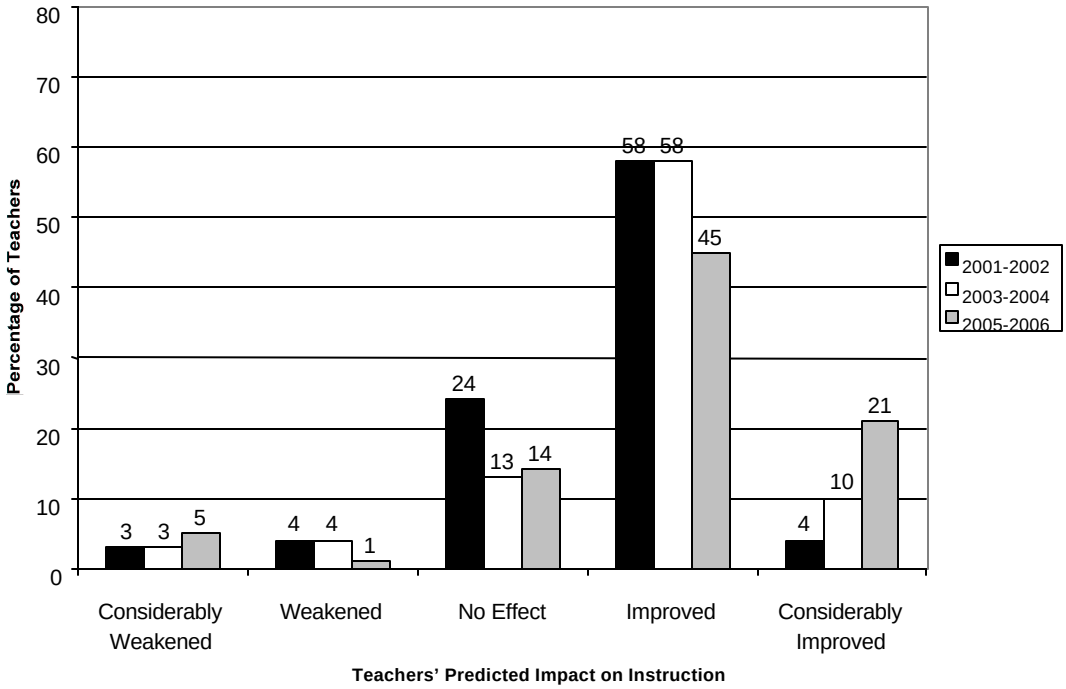

Figure 3.6b. Teachers' prediction of influence of the CAHSEE on instructional practices over time.

One of the concerns when implementing a new exam is whether there is a differential impact on various subgroup populations. We asked principals to estimate the percent of 10th grade students who have had instruction in the ELA and mathematics standards for the total student population, as well as for specific subgroups: students with disabilities, EL students, economically disadvantaged students, and minority students. Figures 3.7a and 3.7b present the results for ELA and mathematics, respectively. For the various student subgroups, responses were less optimistic, especially for the more than 50% who are estimated not to have had instruction in the content standards.

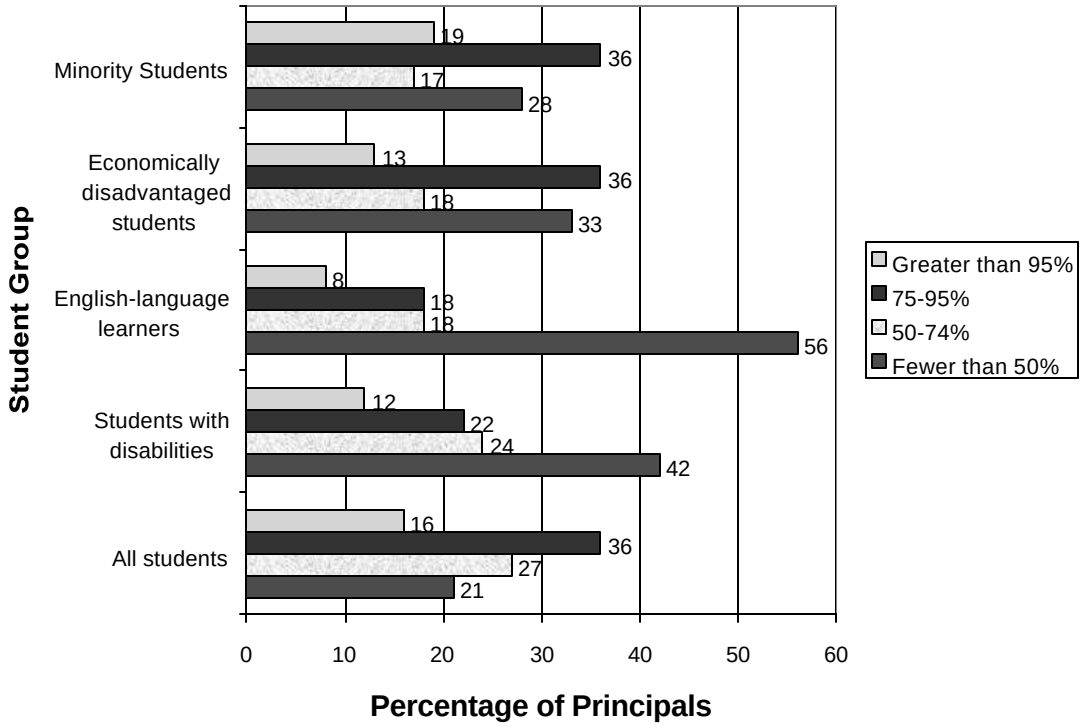

Figure 3.7a. Principals' estimates of the percentage of students who have had instruction in ELA content standards.

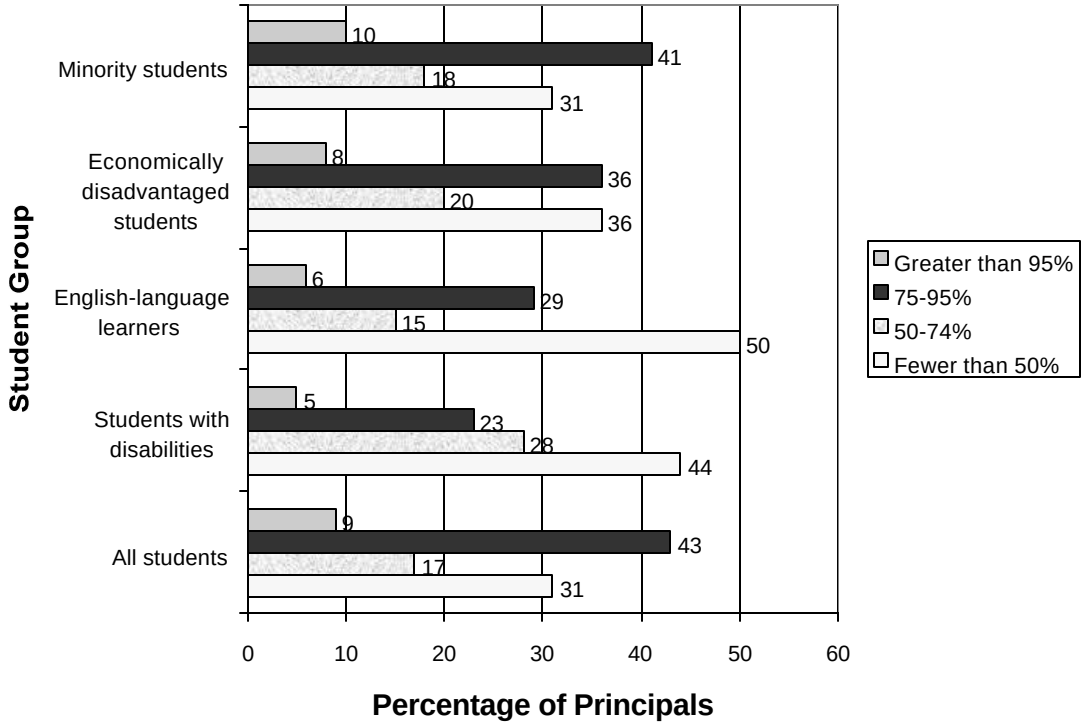

Figure 3.7b. Principals' estimates of the percentage of students who have had instruction in Mathematics content standards.

Standards Taught

For the mathematics standards included in our survey, most of the teachers responding said that these standards were covered in Beginning Algebra, Intermediate Algebra, and Plane Geometry. For Beginning Algebra, just over half of the respondents said that the course was taken by most students. Where an integrated math course was offered, 72% of respondents indicated that most students took the first level of this course. For all other courses, fewer than half of the respondents indicated that most students took the course. Wise et al. (2001) includes tables that show the specific courses listed for each of the content standards included in our survey.

In general, for both mathematics and ELA, very few respondents indicated that the more difficult standards included in our survey were not taught. In many cases, however, they indicated courses that are typically not taken until 10th grade or later.[2] Further, particularly for mathematics, respondents frequently indicated that only some of their students took the courses in which the standards were covered.

Other

Principals were asked to indicate what actions the school plans to take or has implemented to promote learning for all students. The results are presented in Table 3.9. Principals' responses indicate that while many actions have already been undertaken to promote student learning, in many cases these actions have been only partially implemented.

Principals were asked what percentage of their teachers they thought understood the difference between "teaching to the test" and "aligning the curriculum and instruction to the standards". The results are displayed in Figure 3.8 and indicate some room for improvement.

[2] This should be kept in mind when drawing inferences from the fact that many 9th graders have not mastered these standards. It may be the case that these students will be sufficiently prepared to pass the exam by spring of their 10th grade year.

TABLE 3.9 Percentage of Principals Indicating Actions to Promote Student Learning

Action	Plan to Implement		Already Implemented (Stage)	
	No	Yes	Partially	Fully
School, teacher, and student access to appropriate instructional materials	0	9	37	54
Encouragement of all students to take Algebra I	0	16	28	56
Individual student assistance	0	12	61	27
Teacher and school support services	2	16	58	24
Student and parent support services	10	34	39	17
Teacher access to in-service training on content standards	0	12	38	50
Teacher access to in-service training on instructional techniques	2	14	37	47
Administrator and teacher access to in-service training for working with diverse student populations and different learning styles	2	23	42	33

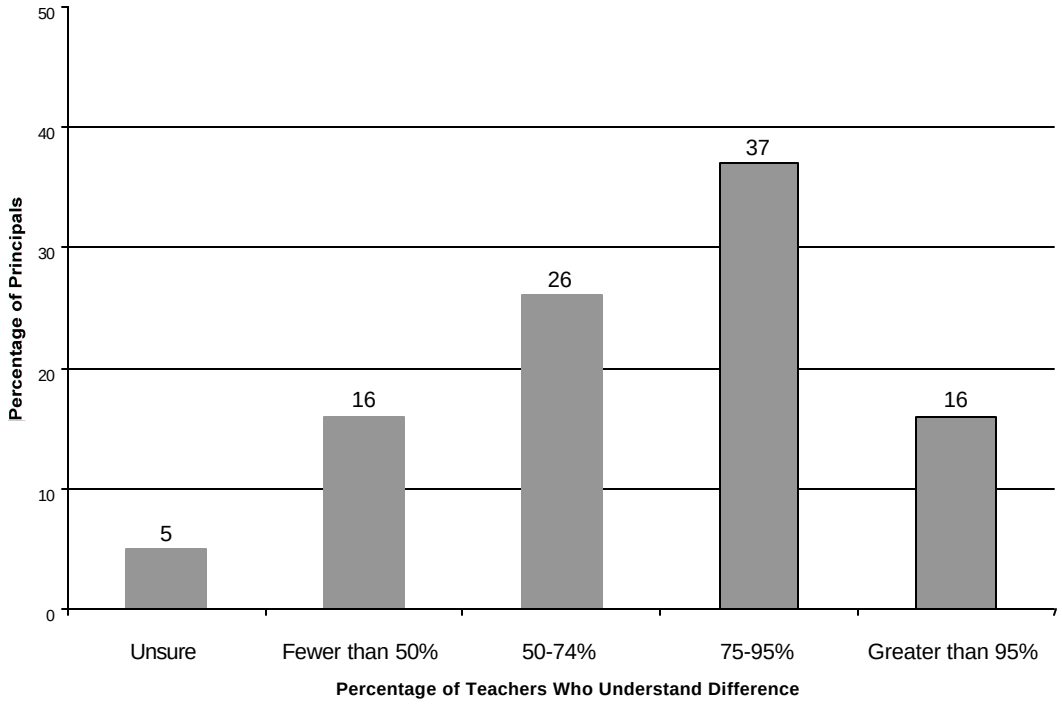

Figure 3.8. Percentage of principals indicating the percentage of teachers who understand the difference between "teaching to the test" and "aligning the curriculum and instruction to the standards."

Summary

Principals and teachers reported significant familiarity with the CAHSEE and the state content standards. While last year principals and teachers indicated they were more familiar with the state content standards than the CAHSEE, this year they reported familiarity with the CAHSEE to be greater than familiarity with the state content standards. Comparable to last year, principals rated themselves as more familiar with the CAHSEE and the state content standards than teachers rated themselves. However, principals' ratings of student and parent familiarity with the CAHSEE increased from last year.

Only a small percentage of teachers reported that they had no source of information on the CAHSEE. Most principals relied primarily upon official channels such as state and district sources and the California Department of Education Web site; teachers reported a greater reliance upon newspaper accounts than did principals.

Preparatory activities continue. For example, nearly all principals reported that districts encourage the use of content standards and approximately one third indicated that their district has adopted the state content standards. The types of activities that were endorsed by approximately half of the principals in preparation for the Spring 2001 administration of the CAHSEE included encouraging students to work hard to prepare for the test, and adoption by their schools of the state content standards. Teachers' preparations included encouraging students to work hard and prepare, teaching test-taking skills, talking with their students, and increasing classroom attention to content standards prior to the CAHSEE.

In addition to adopting the state content standards in preparation for the CAHSEE, most principals reported emphasizing the importance of preparing staff through such efforts as having administrators participate in the February test administration workshops and delivering local workshops on test administration. Nearly half of the teachers were aware of in-service training to modify instructional practices to increase coverage of the content standards.

Teacher and principal estimates of student preparedness were mildly pessimistic. Estimates of the percentages of students likely to meet the CAHSEE standards were very similar this year to last year. However, comparison of 2000 and 2001 responses revealed a slight increase in the estimated preparedness level of students in 9th grade from 2000 to 2001 and a larger increase in the estimated preparedness level of students in 10th grade.

Teachers and principals were again in basic agreement about the impact of the test in various situations. For both years of data collection, principals predicted the CAHSEE would have a neutral to mildly positive impact on student motivation and parental involvement. Principals had predicted slightly more positive impact for students and parents prior to the first administration than they did upon receiving pass/fail results from the first attempt. Teachers' predictions of the impact of the CAHSEE on student motivation and parental involvement were slightly more positive this year. For those students who fail on the first attempt, however, expectations are different and less positive. Further, relatively few principals predicted that failure would have a neutral effect on student motivation, and again two camps emerged: Nearly the same number of principals expected a negative or strongly

negative impact as predicted a positive impact. Principals and teachers remained very consistent in their prediction that the effects of the CAHSEE upon student retention rates and student dropout rates will be negative. The comparison of principals' and teachers' predicted impact of the CAHSEE on student retention and dropout rates across 2000 and 2001 indicated generally similar results, although principals' predictions of the impact on student dropout rates had grown slightly more negative this year.

Despite these concerns about the effects on student motivation and parental involvement, principals and teachers continued to expect that the impact of the CAHSEE on instructional practices would be positive. Further, we asked teachers to estimate effects next year and in 3 and 5 years; they predicted greater improvement with time.

Respondents continued to expect differential impacts for certain student subgroups. They estimated that a much lower percentage of EL and students with disabilities, as compared to all students, would receive instruction in the content standards. Fewer respondents believed that such great differences would be seen with minority and economically disadvantaged students.

With regard to the teaching of the state content standards, very few teachers indicated that the more difficult standards included in our survey were not taught. In many cases, however, they indicated standards were taught in courses that are typically not taken until 10th grade or later. Further, particularly for mathematics, respondents frequently indicated that only some of their students took the courses in which the standards were covered.

In short, the principal and teacher survey responses indicate:

- Increased awareness of the CAHSEE and the state content standards from last year
- Concerns about student preparedness
- Mixed predictions about the impact of the exam on student motivation
- Concern about the impact of the exam on retention rates and dropout rates
- Concern about the success of disadvantaged groups, especially EL students and students with disabilities
- Positive expectations of the impact of the CAHSEE on instructional practices
- Indication that the more difficult standards are taught in most schools, some of the courses are not typically taken until the 10th grade or later, and not by all students.